DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 407 152 PS 025 388

AUTHOR	Landsverk, Ruth Anne
TITLE	Families, Communities, Schools, Learning Together 2, Spring 1995: Families in Education Packet.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction, Madison.
PUB DATE	Apr 95
NOTE	34p.; For 1995 Fall edition, see ED 392 524; for 1996 Spring edition, see ED 402 005.
AVAILABLE FROM	Bureau for Families/Communities/Publications, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 125 South Webster Street, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841; phone: 608-266-9757 (Bulletin No. 95294).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Archaeology; Elementary Secondary Education; *Family School Relationship; Homeless People; Learning Activities; *Parent Participation; Parent Responsibility; Parent Role; *Parent School Relationship; Parent Student Relationship; *Parent Teacher Cooperation; Parenting Skills; Parents as Teachers; Partnerships in Education; Resource Materials; School Community Relationship; Science Activities; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS	Goals 2000; National Education Goals 1990; Summer; Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

This parents' and teachers' guide presents ways that parents and families of elementary and high school students can become involved in their children's academic progress and can enhance conditions for development of all children in their community. Topics covered in this issue are family involvement, family centers, homeless children, family suppers, helping children with science, and summer archaeology. The guide contains the following articles: (1) "How Do Family and Community Involvement Link with National Education Goal 8: Parental Participation?" (2) "The Ten Truths of Family Involvement"; (3) "Families as Advisors: Ideas for Empowering Families as Decisionmakers"; (4) "Starting a Family Center in Your School (And Making it Work!)"; (5) "Educating Homeless Children in Wisconsin: What Can Schools Do?" (6) "What YOU Can Do to Help a Homeless Child: Ideas for Educators"; (7) "For Super Suppertimes: Empower the Children!" (8) "Help Families Participate: Hold A Classroom Family Supper"; (9) "Summertime Learning Ideas: Helping Your Child with Science"; (10) "Embracing Young Children and Families: How Three Wisconsin Communities Do It"; (11) "This Summer Dig into Archaeology: A Primer for Parents"; and (12) "Resources for Family-Community Involvement with Schools." (KDFB)

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Learning Together 2
Families in Education Packet

Spring 1995

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
John T. Benson, State Superintendent
Madison, Wisconsin

This publication is available from

Bureau for Families/Communities/Publications
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
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April 1995

Bulletin No. 95294

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Table of Contents

1. How Do Family and Community Involvement Link with National Education Goal 8: Parental Participation?
2. The Ten Truths of Family Involvement
3. Families as Advisors: Ideas for Empowering Families as Decisionmakers
4. Starting a Family Center in Your School (and making it work!)
5. Educating Homeless Children in Wisconsin: What Can Schools Do?
6. What YOU Can Do to Help a Homeless Child: Ideas for Educators
7. For Super Suppertimes: Empower the Children!
8. Help Families Participate: Hold a Classroom Family Supper
9. Summertime Learning Ideas: Helping Your Child with Science
10. Embracing Young Children and Families: How Three Wisconsin Communities Do It
    - Altoona
    - Sheboygan
    - Plymouth
11. This Summer Dig Into Archaeology: A Primer for Parents
12. Resources for Family-Community Involvement with Schools

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Learning Together 2

How Do Family and Community Involvement Link with National Education Goal 8: Parental Participation?

The best way to answer this question is to ask more questions . . . of *all* those in your community who have a vested interest in the well-being and education of children—senior citizens, businesspersons, parents, teachers, and government representatives. This usually means involving *everyone* in creating a road map for moving your community toward realizing Goal 8 of the National Education Goals, the Parental Involvement Goal.

Goal 8: Parental Participation

By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

The objectives for this goal are that . . .

Every state will develop policies to assist local schools and local educational agencies to establish programs for increasing partnerships that respond to the varying needs of parents and the home . . .

Every school will actively engage parents and familties in a partnership which supports the academic work of children at home and shared educational decisionmaking at school; and

Parents and families will help to ensure that schools are adequately supported and will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability.

In developing this plan, your community will want to ask: "Where are we today, in relation to Goal 8 or our own goal? Where do we want to be by the Year 2000? How will we get there? And how will we know that we're making good progress along the way?"

Following is a closer look at some of the elements that may help your schools and community examine how they will reach Goal 8.

Thirty years of research make it clear: parents and families are pivotal to children's learning. And no refrain is heard more often, in communities headed toward the National Education Goals, than the African proverb, "It takes an entire village to raise one child."

Your community and schools will want to ask: How can we continuously strengthen our partnerships with parents? How can we build and continuously improve our "whole village" partnership for learning?

To answer this question, your community and schools may want to examine:

Early childhood. Are we focusing public and private resources on helping parents prevent their young children's health problems and intervening early, when necessary? Are we ensuring that day care in our community is developmentally appropriate and supportive of parents? Is every child in our community being read to every day? Is every child being taken to the library, museums, plays, concerts, and other performances and cultural events? Does our community make various efforts to support parents and families of young children, so that every child will enter school ready to learn?

Learning at home. Do families in our community use TV wisely? Do they establish daily routines—a time for chores, eating meals together, and firm bedtimes? Do parents set a regular time for children to do homework each day, in a well-lit place, free of distractions such as the telephone, radio, and TV? Do families talk regularly with children about what they're learning in school, and about current events, family history, and other topics? Do families take advantage of libraries, museums, and other educational resources in the community?

Communication between home and school. How often do our teachers and parents talk together about how well individual children are

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doing in school—good news as well as bad—and about how improvements can be made? How can parents and teachers better communicate to help children learn more?

Involvement at home and at school. What are the barriers to getting more parents to help out at school, and how can we overcome these barriers? What are schools doing to make all parents feel welcome at school? What can the schools and various groups in the community do to help keep parents better informed so that families are creating an environment at home that is conducive to learning? What can we do to help all families do things at home to help their children do well in school? Are families looking at report cards and actual student work? Are parents making sure that children always complete homework on time? Do families encourage children to put their best effort into homework? Do parents talk to children regularly—about schoolwork, books the child is reading, world events, and whatever the youngster wants to talk about? Do parents monitor children's TV-watching? How many parents volunteer at school?

Technology. Are we using voicemail or other technologies to facilitate communication between parents and teachers? Are we using technology to let parents know immediately when students are absent, to offer tips on how to help with homework, and to provide other information? Are computers in schools linked to computers at home, or to parents' job sites?

Families facing special challenges. What are we doing to help children—and the families of children—who have limited English proficiency, disabilities, and other special needs, so that these students reach high levels of academic learning?

Grandparents and senior citizens. Are grandparents, retired teachers, and other senior citizens tutoring, guest lecturing, working with small groups of students, or helping in other ways in or outside the classroom?

Employers. What are businesses doing to encourage their employees who are parents to get more involved in their children's education? What leave policies and flex-time arrangements are available to encourage parent participation in the schools? What parent support efforts or programs do employers offer their employees?

Adult literacy. What are libraries, employers, schools, community colleges, churches, volunteer organizations, and others doing to ensure that all parents and adults become literate?

Prevention of violence and drug abuse. To what extent are violence, alcohol, and drug abuse problems in our schools and community? Are unauthorized weapons present in our schools? How safe are our schools? What do students and teachers say? What are we now doing to reduce these problems? What are the media, religious groups, student groups, county organizations, parents, law enforcement, and other groups doing to help? What else do we need to do?

Community service. What community service opportunities are available to youngsters and other members of our community? Can students earn credit or postsecondary financial assistance for helping solve community problems? Are we participating in AmeriCorps—President Clinton's national service program—or using college work-study students as volunteers in the schools?

Basic health and human services. What are we doing to make readily available basic health and human services—such as immunizations, eyeglasses and hearing tests—for low-income families in our community? Do we have governance mechanisms that encourage coordination and communication among housing, employment, welfare, and other services? Do these service providers get adequate training and opportunities to share information and ideas? Do we collect information on the performance of these services? Is this information reported publicly? Are we holding service providers accountable for results?

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Family and public support and engagement. Are we listening to and involving parents? Are we responding to what we hear? Are we working together to analyze our problems and develop solutions? Are we developing a clear and consistent set of messages? Are we delivering these messages regularly and through multiple media and various forums? Do we report regularly on the performance of students and schools, and on plans to improve performance? Do we inspire willingness to come up with the necessary resources? Do we determine the kinds of involvement needed from individuals, organizations, or groups in the community for particular kinds of efforts (including governance, curriculum development, administrative services, apprenticeship programs, and more)? Are we developing strategies for enlisting that support?

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from the booklet, "An Invitation to Your Community: Building Community Partnerships for Learning," which contains information about all eight National Education Goals 2000. To obtain a copy, call the U.S. Department of Education at 1 (800) USA-LEARN.

Learning Together 2

Ten Truths of Family Involvement

1. **All parents have hopes and dreams for their children.**
   They differ in how parents support their children's efforts to achieve those dreams.

2. **Learning takes place in the home, in the school, and in the community.**
   Children benefit most when schools work with, not apart from, other spheres, including home and community.

3. **The parent is the central contributor to a child's education.**
   Children benefit most when schools recognize the parent's role.

4. **Family involvement is a legitimate element of education.**
   It deserves equal emphasis with elements such as program improvement and evaluation.

5. **Parents' and family members' interaction with their own children is the cornerstone of effective involvement.**
   A program must recognize the value, diversity, and difficulty of this role.

6. **Any family can be "hard to reach."**
   Treat parents as individuals. They cannot be defined by gender, ethnicity, education, income, or family situation.

7. **Successful family involvement nurtures relationships and builds partnerships.**
   It strengthens bonds between home and school, parent and teacher, parent and child, school and community.

8. **Many barriers to family involvement are found within school practices.**
   School programs must be tailored to the reality of families' needs and lives.

9. **Family involvement is a process, not a program or an activity.**
   It is most effective when it is well-planned, comprehensive, and involves continuing revision. Three to five years may be needed.

10. **Family involvement requires a vision, policy, and framework.**
    It takes a consensus of goals, a plan of action, and a leader or committee to accept responsibility for the progress of the plan.

adapted from Kagel Elementary School, Milwaukee

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Learning Together 2

Families as Advisors: Ideas for Empowering Families as Decisionmakers

Of the many ways educators can choose to involve families in their children's education, among the most challenging is involving parents and family members as decisionmakers in school policy, programs, and operations. The voices and expertise of families must be heard in the formation and planning of school programs, however, if those programs are to be most responsive to families and most effective for children.

The most important factor for ensuring the successful involvement of families in advisory roles is commitment to the idea of collaboration. The following guidelines and ideas can help schools successfully involve families as advisors and decisionmakers.

1. **Maintain a broad view of collaboration.**

There is no formula for helping families provide input. What is important is that families have many opportunities in a variety of ways to share their expertise. Establishing a variety of formats and forums for families to contribute their perspectives will ensure that many viewpoints shape the discussion. The program, in turn, will be better able to serve families, each with its own diverse perspectives and experiences.

2. **Expand the definition of successful family involvement.**

Limiting your families' opportunities to make decisions by serving only on a long-term advisory board or committee will exclude many families from the discussion process. Developing flexible and time-limited advisory activities will encourage a wide array of perspectives and won't overburden a small number of time-starved families. Short-term approaches will also make both families and organizers feel successful. Review the "Family Involvement: Broadening Our Vision" Checklist for more ideas.

3. **Identify and recruit families to participate in innovative ways.**

Identifying advisory families may be particularly challenging if the families have not been involved in an advisory role before, when they speak a different language, or are from a culture which does not encourage extensive collaboration with the school. Following are a few strategies for identifying and recruiting such families:

- asking families served by the program,
- asking teachers and other school staff for their suggestions for interested families,
- enlisting the support of your local PTA or PTO,
- using the knowledge of staff in health care, social services, or other community agencies who may work closely with families,
- developing radio, television, and newspaper public service announcements in the languages of the communities the program hopes to reach,
- posting notices in appropriate languages in the school newsletter, church bulletins, grocery stores, community centers, and waiting rooms in other recreational and social service sites,
- contacting organizations that serve particular cultural groups.

4. **Look for opportunities to promote family involvement.**

Be vigilant about opportunities to promote families' perspectives at all program and policy levels. Every new initiative, needs assessment, program evaluation, or training activity your school or district undertakes provides a new opportunity for families' input.

5. **Provide training and support to both families and school staff.**

Learning to work collaboratively requires new skills for both educators and families. Before joining formal committees, family members will benefit from receiving a thorough orientation about the work and the history of the group. Give families asked to speak before a group or at a conference plenty of time to practice their presentation. Match new families with veteran families to offer important support as they move into advisory roles. Conflict resolution and team-

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building training can greatly enhance the effectiveness of family-as-advisor participation.

6. **Anticipate problems and plan for them to occur.**

Many factors may impede family participation: transportation, child care, scheduling, location, language, cash flow, and lack of support staff. Try to ensure that all costs for family participation are covered up front or are eliminated. Most families are eager to participate in an advisory role, but must balance the demands of their personal lives with the expectations of their advisory roles.

7. **Believe family participation is essential.**

Schools committed to inviting families to become advisors and decisionmakers are schools that will have higher performing students, more supportive families, and more responsive and effective school programs. Use "Families As Advisors: A Checklist For Attitudes" and "Guidelines for Successfully Involving Family Members on Boards, Task Forces, and Committees" to assess attitudes, beliefs, and practices about family participation in your school's advisory activities.

This article was adapted from the newsletter, "Advances in Family-Centered Care," Fall 1994, published by the Institute for Family-Centered Care, 7900 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 405, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Starting a Family Center in Your School (and making it work!)

This article was condensed from the Family Centers booklet, from "A Tool Kit for Quilting," published by The League of Schools Reaching Out, a project of The Institute for Responsive Education. The Tool Kit is available from the Institute at (617) 353-3309 or 605 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.

What is a Family Center?

A family center is a place in the school (or nearby) where families can always feel welcome and comfortable—a place that serves their needs and, in doing so, supports the social and academic success of children. Many family centers provide resources that families need to make their home a supportive place for the education of children.

Sometimes the family center is a meeting ground for school staff, students, parents, grandparents, and local business community representatives.

A center allows families to feel a sense of ownership in the school, to feel like insiders. The family center is a new, creative space within the school that permits school staff and families to establish relationships, programs, and activities different from those of the past.

Finally, family centers are an important symbolic statement that says, "Yes, families are an important part of the fabric of this school."

A Space for Families

A family center is a space in the school that families can call their own. What kinds of space should you look for?

For some, the choice is "whatever is available"—the former teachers' lounge, a one-time supply room, a corner of the library, or a vacant classroom. If you can choose, a room on the main floor of the building near the principal's office would be ideal. The main office is often the center of action in the school, has higher traffic flow, and allows easy access.

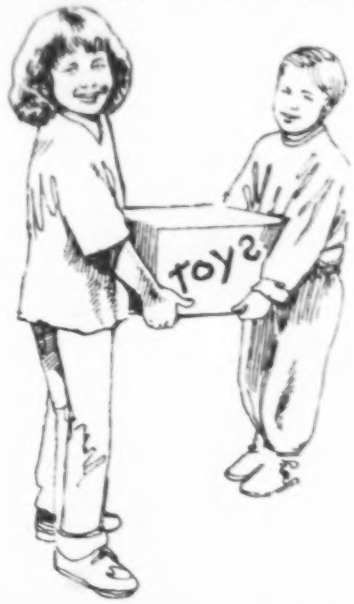
Remember, a strong family group can be your most important lobby for space in the building. Before they meet with administrators to discuss alternatives and write follow-up letters, be sure the purpose of the family center and some activities it is to provide have been spelled out.

Other items to encourage families to relax and talk include adult-sized furniture such as tables, chairs, and a sofa, a telephone, a coffee pot and hot water for tea, and storage for food and supplies. A refrigerator is a great addition, and a popcorn maker in action before meetings is sure to draw a crowd. Good lighting is a must, and a play area for toddlers and other young children will help parents and grandparents to come without having to find babysitters. A "toybrary" from which parents and children can borrow toys and games is an added attraction.

Staffing Your Family Center

The staff will be the heartbeat of your family center. The parent who comes to a cold, darkened, empty room will feel much different than the parent greeted by a warm smile and a pot of hot coffee. Some centers have part-time staff paid with Chapter 1 grant funds and supplemented by volunteers.

Others, reluctant to get involved with salary and labor issues, get their family centers up and



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running with a corps of dedicated volunteers. Some schools launch their efforts with the assistance of a paraprofessional on staff. If possible, this person should be someone who is especially good at working with parents and who lives in the community.

A Place Where Things Happen

Just as families together know an awful lot about where to go to get things done in a community, your family center should be an important source of information and referrals, a place to "talk over the back fence." Make it a place where parents can come to get help with translation, get answers to questions about child care and health and social services, receive GED and ESL instruction, and talk about their children's education.

Some schools use their centers as places for parenting education and family nutrition classes, and job support services. Social events are a great way to invite families into the center to have fun. Family breakfasts can be a friendly, happy way to get parents and teachers together before work. Holiday parties, multicultural celebrations, and staff appreciation days can be planned by family groups.

Family members who feel comfortable in the center are often interested in volunteering as classroom aides, tutors, and supervisors in the library and on the playground.

Home-school communication is also a good job for family center participants to take on. Groups of parents are often willing to undertake planning for home visits, a telephone tree, or a homework hotline. Family centers spur the development of smaller social networks of parents who need a place to explore and do their common interests—cooking, community concerns, and quiltmaking, to name a few.

Teachers can find help at the family center, too, in preparing for art projects or a bulletin board, planning a class birthday party, or choosing a new set of library materials.

A Place Where Relationships Happen

Invite everyone to be a part of planning for and conducting the day-to-day activity of the family center. Administrators are often the most knowledgeable about available resources. Teachers are rich resources of information about the needs of children and their families. Teachers must see the family center as a source of help for them, something that makes their job easier.

For instance, teachers often appreciate access to a telephone placed in a family center, and the possibilities are virtually endless for how volunteer programs coordinated from the family center can assist teachers: tutoring or mentoring activities, telephone trees to reach families, and teacher appreciation days.

Make planning and oversight of the family center the responsibility of a school-community council. Members could include parents, the principal, teachers, and a community representative. The council's mission could include discussion of how to start the center, how it finds resources and support, how it should grow, whether it's working, and how it can be integrated with the school's other initiatives.

Funding

Use your imagination here. One school was happily rewarded when it let banks, stores, churches, and local businesses know of its needs and was able to fill the room with a couch, coffee pot, chairs, and filing cabinet. It paid for their

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parent room coordinator with Chapter 1 funds and seek state grants to stock library shelves with resources. A local foundation funded emergency services and provisions for families in need, and a quilt produced by participants at a quilting workshop in the center decorates the walls.

Extending the Reach of Your Family Center

There's no single, end-all way to let families know you're in existence, but once you let them know that you care about them in a number of ways, your efforts will be well-rewarded by participation and support. Choose the ideas which best reflect the personality and uniqueness of your school and community:

Create a brochure or information sheet—simple, lively, and inviting—about the family center and make sure that all school families receive one.

Make follow-up calls to families so they know they're welcome and that the center is for them.

Develop a survey of family needs and interests, follow up with the results of the survey, and let families know how the center can address some of those needs and interests.

Offer workshops for families, trying different times of day or night to see what works best for people in your community. Workshops can focus on parenting skills, available resources in the community, and parent educational opportunities such as GED or ESL.

Hold open houses at the center, coordinating them with school events likely to draw a crowd.

Host families. During the first few days of school ask parents and families to act as hosts and hostesses to welcome parents and make them feel comfortable.

Promote school performances. Encourage families, coming to school to see their children perform, to drop by the family center before or after performances for refreshments.

Develop a community resource guide. A good first-year project for participants, the guide could be the collective knowledge of families about what resources exist in the community.

Translate all materials into appropriate languages, not only the pieces you think important. School families and staff may provide the resources needed to translate.

Make a video. Parents in one school developed a video about the family center to welcome new families, offering versions in several languages.

Establish a communication system early on to spread information about the planning group and the center. Let everyone in and around the school know who these folks are, why the group was formed, and what they plan to do.

Develop a family center newsletter. Make sure it's sent to all school families and include ideas and information on assisting children with learning. If there's a PTO or PTA newsletter at your school, join forces and produce the newsletter together.

Make home visits to families who have not responded to other forms of outreach. Use trained parent volunteers.

Take pictures of the family center and its staff and hang them in the main office with explanatory captions. Hang posters, too.

Explore the possibility of organizing family car pools to the school.

Create a coffee break! Set up an information table outside the school building with coffee and doughnuts for parents bringing their children to school and get to know the families.

Advertise your family center in local church bulletins, community newspapers, the cable access channel, grocery store fliers, and wherever families go.

Connect with community service organizations that may be interacting with the same families.

Above all, hang in there! It takes time, energy, love, and patience, but eventually families will discover that they need just what you are there to provide.

Learning Together 2

Educating Homeless Children in Wisconsin: What Can Schools Do?

More than 12,000 Wisconsin children are homeless on any given day, according to a 1992 DPI survey of school districts, family shelters, and service agencies. Since that survey was conducted three years ago, those numbers have probably grown and schools are increasingly faced with the challenge of educating children who consider "home" a car, a hotel, a relative's home, or the changing faces, smells, and sounds of a shelter for the homeless.

The Need

The number of homeless people in this country is fast approaching the levels of the Great Depression. Today, families with children are the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population. Between two and four million people are expected to be homeless before the end of this decade. One third to one half of them will be children.

In Wisconsin, the DPI survey showed that the greatest number of homeless children were elementary-aged (4,252 in K-6), closely followed by pre-school children (3,764). Homeless middle school children numbered 2,025 and high school youths numbered 1,968.

Homelessness affects children in both urban and rural areas in Wisconsin. A special federal program to ensure that homeless children attend school, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, funds programs in the school districts of Ashland, Siren, South Shore, Delavan-Darien, Chippewa Falls, Menominee Indian, CESA 2, Madison, Milwaukee, Green Bay, Kenosha, and Racine.

Some homeless children may live in chaos and uncertainty, may never know where they will be living or eating, or how their basic needs will be met. Since school may be one of the only sources of stability in the life of a homeless child, school staff and administrators need to be aware of how homelessness affects the child's ability to learn and what they can do to help homeless children be successful in school.

What are some issues homeless children face when they come to school?

First and foremost, of course, homeless children are children. They face the same basic needs as other children:

- physiological needs of shelter, clothing, food and warmth,
- safety needs of order, security, continuity, and well-being,
- the need to feel loved,
- the need for self-esteem and a sense of control over one's destiny.

However, homelessness prevents many of these needs from being met. For example, some homeless children may:

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- arrive at school with upper respiratory infections, skin disorders, and other illnesses due to their increased exposure to the elements and the stress in their lives.
- have difficulty establishing close friendships at school because they have been frequently uprooted.
- be embarrassed to come to school because they don't have clean clothes or appropriate shoes and are afraid of being teased.
- fear coming to school because they don't want others to know that they live in a shelter, a car, or other unusual setting.
- behave aggressively or be withdrawn because they may have been victims of physical or sexual abuse or may have witnessed extremely violent behavior.
- not be able to afford pens and pencils, paper, or gym clothes. They may be concerned about not fitting in with other children or about being punished for not having those items.
- receive little attention from parents who are absorbed in the process of acquiring work or surviving. These children may also behave inappropriately in an attempt to gain such attention from the teacher.
- have nowhere to go after school or have no appropriate place to do homework, study, eat, or play in a safe environment.
- live in constant fear that they will be abducted by an abusive parent or that their parent may be hurt by an abusive spouse or friend. These children may find it difficult to walk home alone after school or to concentrate on schoolwork.
- blame themselves for their family's homelessness. Often, they feel frustrated by their inability to help the family overcome its difficulties.

What can school staff do to help homeless children succeed?

Schools with practices especially helpful for homeless children:

- have climates in which all children feel accepted, welcome, and safe.
- promote expectations that the staff will help every child succeed.
- focus on instruction that responds to each child's learning needs.
- work with parents or other family members in mutual respect and concern for each child's academic, social, and emotional growth.
- evaluate progress towards the child's learning goals, and
- have leadership articulating a vision for all of the above.

Ideas for schools to encourage the success of homeless children include:

- **offer extra counseling** to address the child's emotional needs;
- **initiate a system** in which school staff serve as mentors for homeless children, providing them with at least a weekly contact to help them feel welcome. Staff can include custodians, secretaries, food service staff, and instructional aides;
- **provide a teacher** or trained instructional aide for all newly-enrolled children to assess at what level instruction should begin;
- **provide shelters with packets** of school supplies so homeless children arrive at school ready to learn;
- **develop a buddy system** to provide a friendly welcome to newly-enrolled children;
- **work closely with shelters** and other agencies so children can have prompt access to services available in the community;
- **offer before and after-school programs** to provide homeless children with tutoring, safe recreation, meals, snacks, and counseling;
- **maintain a clothes closet** to provide homeless children with needed clothing, coats, shoes, or personal hygiene items;
- **provide transportation to parents** to ensure that they feel welcome at their children's school and are able to attend school functions;
- **arrange for school staff to tour shelters**, meet shelter staff, and build positive relationships with parents and shelter personnel;
- **advertise school programs** in shelters and encourage students to enroll;

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• **form child study teams** to establish and review learning goals for each child;
• **cultivate a number of visiting teachers**, social workers, or parent ombudsmen who visit homeless children where they live and offer to connect families with services available in the community.
• **provide transportation to school** for homeless children when shelters are in dangerous environments or when their location would prevent them from attending school.

Learning Together 2

What YOU Can Do to Help a Homeless Student

Ideas for School Staff

Counselors

- Make each child feel welcome.
- Observe and refer for services those students needing food, clothing, shelter, or basic medical attention.
- Post a basic need resource list throughout the school.
- Schedule a brief educational assessment.
- Make contact with a parent or person acting as parent.

Administrators

- Make each child feel welcome.
- Appoint a staff person to do an educational assessment.
- Appoint a school site advocate for the child.
- Give five minutes a week to talking with a homeless child.
- Schedule an appointment with a shelter director to learn about living conditions there.
- Schedule staff meetings to include discussion on student progress.

Administrative Assistants

- Make the family of each child feel welcome.
- Review identification and immunization records; contact the child's advocate for assistance.
- Make sure the student receives free school breakfast and lunch.
- Let the child's teacher or advocate know the child is living in a temporary shelter.
- Observe special situations that the child's teacher or advocate should be aware of, for example, the need for glasses, hygiene, and so forth.

Teachers

- Make each child feel welcome.
- Select a student to be their "buddy" on the first day—a good idea for all new students.
- Review student records from other school(s).
- Refer the child to tutorial classes, as needed.
- Contact the child's site advocate to coordinate an education plan.
- Provide a stable environment and structure.
- Allow the child to bring personal possessions and have personal space and encourage other children to respect his or her rights to both.
- Expect regressions and unobtrusively monitor them.
- Assign projects that can be broken into small components to ensure at least some success.
- Allow students to express fears and frustrations by talking about them, drawing them, and so forth.
- Make professional help quickly available, for example, an informed school counselor.
- Be open to students' needs to talk, without prying.
- Give students opportunities to see that some of their experiences have been positive, for instance, the places they've travelled.
- Don't assume students know how to play. They may have to be taught.
- Make certain federal food programs are available for breakfast and lunch.

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For Super Suppertimes: Empower the Children!

by Audrey Janssen, R.D.
DPI Child Nutrition Consultant

It is amazing how truly progressive families can become dictatorships at mealtime. During the rest of the day, children are encouraged and allowed to make decisions and choices to foster independence. At mealtime, all the rules change. Adults decide what and how much will be on the child's plate and, even worse, how much the child should eat.

Consider this mealtime procedure recently observed at a home. All plates, utensils, and napkins were placed on the table by Mom, who then portioned out food onto each plate and poured milk into each cup. After washing their hands, the children were told to come eat dinner. While eating, Mom hovered around the table, sitting only long enough to eat a bite or two, keeping up a fairly steady stream of commands all the while: "Eat another bite of your beans, Timmy," "Don't open your sandwich," "Don't mix the beans and the applesauce," "Use your fork/spoon/napkin."

When the children wanted seconds, Mom administered them, serving from the large pot at the stove and the gallon milk jug on the counter. Left to their own devices at the table, the children became loud and silly, which led to Mom hopping about more and trying to control things from the sidelines.

By the end of the meal, Mom was tired, irritated, and only marginally successful in controlling her young ones' behavior. The children were anxious to go back to playing in another room, where they felt more comfortable and independent.

Most of this pressure stems from the best of intentions by the adult and, in some cases, goes back to how the adult was treated as a child. It may be the adult's subconscious definition of how a "good" parent is supposed to act. In reality, though, did anyone ever become a brussels sprout fanatic by being forced to sit at the table until he or she ate one?

Studies have shown that less is actually better when it comes to pressuring children to eat new foods. Children need repeated exposures to foods before they want to put even a tiny morsel into their mouths. This is normal and may harken back to a time when our early ancestors had to very selectively pick and gather only what was edible.

So, what's a parent to do? The best approach is based on the book, *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense*, by Ellyn Satter, a noted Registered Dietitian. She sees feeding as a division of responsibilities. The adult's responsibility is to provide a variety of attractive, wholesome food in a pleasant atmosphere. The child's responsibility is to decide which and how much of these healthy foods to eat.

Children eat differently than adults, Ms. Satter notes. Children still have the built-in sense of when to stop eating that many of us have learned to ignore. They also tend to waste food. The price you paid to provide fresh asparagus in the middle of winter will not make the asparagus any more acceptable to a child. Children also need to feel in control of their eating. This means that family-style meals, where children aged three and over can serve themselves, are ideal.

The ultimate result is that by following the division of responsibility, you have set the limits

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that a child needs to feel secure and can stop spending energy controlling a child's intake. By allowing only healthy choices, you can sit back, relax, and enjoy the meal, too. And what about those times when your little angel flatly refuses to eat? Ms. Satter recommends that he or she be required to be at the table to provide company for the rest of the family. *Cheerful* company, that is!

How can meals be more child-centered?

- Allow children to take turns helping to set the table.
- Encourage children three and over to try and serve themselves. Place small serving bowls of food on the table. Place milk on the table in a small (two-cup), plastic pitcher with a platter under it. After a few spills, even three-year-olds will learn to competently pour, pass, and clear.
- Children can request that food be passed to them instead of shouting out orders for seconds.
- Parents, sit with children at the table. You'll slow down to the children's pace of eating, which will be healthier for you, provide a good model of manners and appropriate behavior at the table for children, and be able to engage them in conversation about their day at home, school, or child care.
- As children finish, excuse each one to clear his place, wash her or his hands, and go on with their activities.

Mealtimes are important!

Learning Together 2

Help Families Participate: Hold a Classroom Family Supper

Make it easy for your students' families to get to know each other and feel positive about your school. Host a Classroom Family Supper. The networking and relationships you'll watch happen among parents, teachers, and family members will be well worth the simple preparations you'll need for this occasion.

Be inclusive. Invite other school staff to join the supper and ask the PTA or PTO to co-sponsor the event. Let students help plan a theme for the menu, write invitations to their parents, and design activities for siblings and other children attending. Be sure to include an RSVP on the invitation. One hint: it's easier for parents to respond if you attach a return form to the invitation.

A family-friendly format:

5:00 p.m. Arrival time. Ask greeters (room parents or students) to make sure everyone has a nametag. Consider starting with a mixer or ice-breaker activity to help people get to know one another. One good activity asks people to obtain signatures on a list of descriptions, for example, "Find someone who was born in this community." Have students come up with a list of descriptors!

5:30 p.m. Eat supper. Don't make those hungry children wait too long! Try to eat no later than 30 minutes after arrival.

Menu suggestions include

- Pizza, soda, and milk. Your local pizza store may offer discounted large-volume prices and delivery.
- Sandwich buffet. Local deli's and grocery stores offer pre-assembled meat and cheese trays, vegetable and fruit trays, breads, relishes, milk, and soda.
- Potluck supper. In the invitation, ask parents to bring a dish to pass and their table service. On the return form, ask parents what type of dish they plan to bring, for example, dessert, casserole, beverage, salad. You can also designate the supper as a "hot dog day" or "chili night," and encourage everyone to bring the same thing.

6:00 p.m. Children's activities and adult program begin. Children can go to the gymnasium for a supervised program or activities or to a quieter setting to do some homework. Enlist the help of middle school and senior high school students looking for volunteer and service-learning opportunities, with adult supervision.

Gather adults for an informational discussion with the teacher. The teacher, his or her designate, or a parent may facilitate a discussion. Allow everyone to introduce themselves. One option is to have people pair up to interview each other, and then introduce their partner. The content of the discussion can be informal. The teacher may want to ask parents to identify issues of concern to them or to talk about what children are learning and how parents can complement classroom learning at home with specific activities or practices.

Since the purpose of a classroom family supper is to give families the opportunity to get to know one another, be sure and leave time for free-flowing discussion among parents to occur.

Keep it simple! For the first supper, you might even want to let parents talk without an organized program. Encourage a few outgoing parents to see that everyone feels comfortable.

7:00 p.m. Reconvene for dessert or simply adjourn.

Funding. You can ask for donations (offer a suggested amount), collect money ahead of time to make a reservation, or feature "potluck" and skip the funding.

Planning Checklist. Be sure to include students and parents in planning and carrying out activities. You'll need to think about who will do the following duties:

- planning committee
- take reservations
- greet arrivals
- act as discussion facilitator
- provide paper plates, utensils, napkins
- set up and clean up
- supervise children; conduct activities

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Learning Together 2

Summertime Learning Ideas: Helping Your Child with Science

Dear Parent:

You play a critical role in determining how much science your child learns. Your enthusiasm and encouragement can spark your child's natural curiosity about how things work and grow. Scientific knowledge is cumulative, so the earlier you start, the more your child will learn.

You don't need to have a strong science background. What's far more important than knowing what a sound is or how a telescope works is having a positive attitude about science.

And, you don't need expensive chemistry sets or books. Take time to look at the natural world with your child and observe what goes on.

Together, parents and children can:

- see how long it takes for a dandelion or a rose to burst into full bloom;
- watch the moon as it appears to change shape over the course of a month and record the changes;
- watch a kitten grow into a cat;
- bake a cake;
- teach ways to prevent spreading a nasty head cold;
- guess why one of your plants is drooping; and
- figure out how the spin cycle of the washing machine gets water out of the clothes.

Don't feel as if you have to know the answers to all of your child's questions. Find out the answers together by reading, talking to people, and visiting places like museums, zoos, libraries, farms, and forests. Isidor I. Rabi, a Nobel prize winner in physics, once commented that while other mothers would ask their children, "Did you learn anything new today?" her mother would ask, "*Did you ask a good question today?*"

We can also offer an especially important type of encouragement by listening to our children's ideas and explanations. Being listened to helps the child gain confidence in her thinking and helps parents determine what the child's interests are and how much she knows.

How can parents help children think "scientifically?" Although we all need to know a few scientific facts (for example, water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or 0 degrees Celsius), science is much more than a collection of facts. It includes

- observing what's happening;
- predicting what might happen;
- testing predictions to see if they are correct; and
- trying to make sense of our observations.

Science fiction writer Isaac Asimov described science as "a way of thinking." Science involves trial and error—trying, failing, and trying again. Science does *not* provide all of the answers, but it does ask us to be skeptical so our scientific "conclusions" can be changed as we make new discoveries. Remember:

- **children form their own ideas about science from their experiences.** Although their conclusions may not match current scientific interpretations, we need to allow children to ask questions and make observations without feeling "stupid."
- **children, especially younger ones, understand science best when they learn "hands-on."** They gain confidence in their own ability to think critically and solve problems when they can see, touch, and modify situations.

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- **introduce children to a few topics in depth** instead of teaching them just a little about many things. This helps children learn to think scientifically. Find out what your child likes to do best—cook, hike, build things, or plant things—and incorporate science activities into his interests.
- **allow your child to help select activities.** She'll learn more if she's doing something she enjoys. Also, consider her personality and age as you suggest activities—does she enjoy working in a group or alone? A child who is interested in a subject can often handle material for an age higher than suggested.
- **have fun!**

Science Activities at Home

The Big Picture. Explore another world. Use your magnifying glass to see what's hidden under leaves or in soil, how mosquitos bite, butterfly wings, and what's on both sides of leaves. How many different objects can you find in the soil? Draw pictures or describe what you see in a notebook.

It Floats! Encourage hypothesizing (guessing). Ask your child to guess which objects—soap, a dry sock, a bottle of shampoo, a wet sponge, and empty bottle—will float when dropped one-by-one into a bathtub, pool, or sink filled with water.

Ice Is Nice. Improve observation and questioning skills by freezing and melting ice. Ask your child how long he or she thinks it will take to freeze an ice cube tray filled with water. Will cubes filled with smaller amounts of water freeze in the same time as those filled with more water? Set ice cubes on a table. Ask your child to estimate how long they will take to melt. Why do they melt? Place ice cubes in different areas of the room. Do some melt faster than others? Why?

Splish Splash. Improve measuring skills. Fill a small container, such as a quart bottle, with water. Then pour the water, using a funnel if necessary, into a large container, such as a half-gallon or gallon. How many small containers does it take to fill a large one? Fill a short, squat container with a given amount of water—three cups, for example. Ask your child if a tall, thin container will hold more or less than the other one. Does it hold more? Write this down in a science journal.

Moldy Oldies. Put one cup filled with coffee or leftover food on a sunny windowsill, one in the refrigerator, and one in a dark cupboard. Look inside the cups every day and write down what you see. How do temperature and light affect the growth of the mold? How do these mold differ from those on oranges, cottage cheese, bread, and bathroom tiles? A magnifying glass will help.

Stalking Celery. How do plants "drink" water? Cut four stalks of celery about four inches below where the celery stalks and leaves meet. Place each stalk in a separate cup of purple water (use 10 drops each of red and blue food color for each half-cup of water). Every two hours from the time you put the stalks in the water, remove one of the stalks. Carefully peel the rounded part of the stalk with a vegetable peeler to see how far up the water has travelled. Measure the distance the water has travelled and record that amount in your science journal. Does the distance change with time? In what way? How long does it take for the leaves to change? Try other objects around your house or in nature that enable liquids to climb by capillary action—paper towels, sponges, old sweat socks, brown paper bags, and flowers.

This article is excerpted from the booklet, Helping Your Child Learn Science, prepared by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. It is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office Order Desk by calling (202) 783-3238, GPO Stock Number 065-000-00520-4.

Embracing Young Children and Families: How Three Wisconsin Communities Do It

How can a community reach out and offer a "collective hug" to its youngest members and their families? How can it create a caring, nurturing environment that helps families and schools stimulate and strengthen the love of learning each child is born with?

There are many ways to do it, and, in this article, three Wisconsin communities describe their efforts—the structure, the goals, and the commitment of individuals that show that communities care deeply about the well-being of children from birth and fully engage them and their families in learning *before* they get to the schoolhouse door.

Altoona has a Children's Council that builds community awareness about the needs of young children. **Plymouth** has an Early Childhood Coordinating Council that has become a vital, pro-child forum for the community to rally around. **Sheboygan's** Early Learning Center is on the road to creating "one-stop" delivery of education, health, and social services for young children and families.

Your community can do it, too. Yes, such an effort requires hard work, time, and funding. But, the common catalyst in each of these communities has been a few individuals with the temerity to believe that all members of a community want to invest in the promise of young children.

The Altoona Children's Council: A Parent's Perspective

by Ann Kaiser, Altoona parent

For the past year, I have been fortunate, as a parent, to be part of an innovative community effort for young children aged birth to eight. The Altoona School District received a two-year Learning Assistance Planning Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to begin an early childhood collaborative community council.

The Altoona Children's Council has been charged with conducting a community needs assessment, studying community resources, and developing a plan to coordinate existing services and developing new services. The long-range vision for the school district is to provide comprehensive, coordinated services to integrate early childhood education, child care, and family services.

In December 1993, the district's early childhood teacher and I, acting as grant coordinators, began holding monthly meetings of those in our community involved with young children and their families. Nearly 100 persons comprise our list of educators, health care professionals, social service staff, community members, parents, and child care providers who receive monthly meeting notices and attend meetings of the Children's Council.

Each month we gather at a different time of day and location to accommodate as many busy schedules as possible, limiting meetings to one hour. Regular meeting attendees include the city administrator, UW-Extension family living educator, Head Start staff, school district administrators, county health nurse, and child care resource and referral coordinator. Our guiding philosophy is best summed up in the mission of the

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Learning Together 2

Altoona Children's Council: to help Altoona's children reach their full potential by supporting nurturing environments within the home, school, and community.

Our first year's activities have laid valuable groundwork. We have

- **Gained exposure for the council** within the community by developing a logo and the slogan, "Altoona: a great place for children to grow." A billboard, banners, brochures, T-shirts, and zipper pulls bear our identity.
- **Given something valuable to the community**. We established a Family Resource Center at the public library and sponsored family events, such as a back-to-school ice cream social and a family story hour for Children's Book Week.
- **Gathered information from the community**. We conducted and completed a district-wide survey and community resources assessment of early childhood issues.

Woven into all of these initiatives is the importance of encouraging family-community-school partnerships. The monthly meetings have shaped new avenues for community groups, schools, and individuals to network and share ideas, and created opportunities to work together in new ways. In a relatively short period of time our community has endorsed the efforts of the Altoona Children's Council as vital.

As a parent, I have been stepping into a world traditionally left to professionals who are experts in their respective fields. I have felt part of a new movement that seeks to involve parents as professionals who are experts in the field of children and families. It has been refreshing to feel that my opinion as parent is welcomed and that my experience as parent is valued.

In short, the Altoona Children's Council has been a tool for encouraging parents to broaden their involvement within schools and the community. How can parents in other communities become more involved? My suggestions include

- Start with the connection most available to you. Write a note to your child's teacher, contact a PTA member, or call the school office.
- Offer something positive—your time at home or at school, your talent or a resource, or even a note of encouragement to someone at school. We all like to know what we're doing *right*!
- Learn about your school and your community. There may be a particular facet of your child's school or your community's programs that interests you.
- Listen to the perspective of teachers, your principal, and other family members.
- Read to help you understand that perspective. Your school, public library, and other parents and families offer a wealth of resources.
- Build upon the strengths you see in your school. You may find your needs echoed by others. What can you do to meet those needs together?

My involvement began with small steps that became larger as our family began to invest time and energy and care in our school. As the relationship among family, school, and community grows, so does the potential for doing good for children of all ages in the community.

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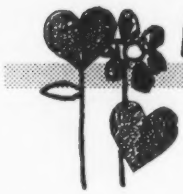

Learning Together 2

Sheboygan's Early Learning Center: Working Together for Children

by Theresa Mueller
Early Learning Program Assistant
Sheboygan School District

Responding to the need-for more elementary classrooms and recognizing that early childhood learning with parent involvement is vital to success in school, the Sheboygan School District created an "Early Learning Center Model" in 1989. Two rented (former parochial) school buildings housed early childhood programs formerly located in a variety of elementary schools.

The district purchased and renovated a five-store shopping center in 1992 and the early childhood programs moved into their new quarters in the fall of 1994. Here, school district staff work with children to meet their needs. An essential component of the Center's efforts include family involvement practices such as home training, parent workshops, and in-school activities for parents and children.

The Early Learning Center's mission is to provide a warm and nurturing environment where learning patterns, individual differences, and cultural and linguistic diversities of young children are respected. The Center offers a developmentally-appropriate curriculum that responds to the comprehensive needs of children and actively involves parents and other family members as partners. It draws on the resources of community agencies and networks to provide continuity for children as they mature.

About 650 children and their families receive direct services at the Center. Program offerings include English as a Second Language for Hmong and Hispanic children, First Step special education services; Giant Step pre-kindergarten program; Creative Play, a for-fee program offered by the Sheboygan Community Recreation Department; extended-day kindergarten; a Chapter 1 program; and Even Start family literacy activities. A Head Start program also rents space in the facility.

More than 500 other families receive additional services such as Child Find screening opportunities, family counseling, and referral consultation services. In addition, all families of young children birth to age five receive birthday mailings that describe developmental milestones and offer assistance to families of young children with questions or concerns. The mailings, funded by a local medical clinic, also invite children to receive age-appropriate gifts.

The Center recently established a Family-School Resource Center to help families realize their roles as their child's first and most important teachers. The resource center serves as a central connecting point between school and the families of young special needs children and those identified as at-risk because of demographic or other factors.

A goal of the Early Learning Center is to develop "one-stop" delivery of services for families, dissolving the boundaries between family education, child care, and health care. The center is one of Wisconsin's first school efforts to consolidate access to services for families. Center staff make many efforts to involve parents and family members in their children's learning, including

- conducting home visits. Teachers show parents how to teach children cognitive and social skills, how to play interactively, and provide books and other materials to encourage learning at home.
- featuring parent-child activities at school. Sheboygan parents with children in various programs recently made gingerbread houses, received ideas about making and buying toys, and prepared food to celebrate Hmong New Year's Eve.
- encouraging parents to volunteer at the Center. Each family completes an interest inventory, choosing how they would like to volunteer in the classroom: assembling art projects, reading to classes, speaking to classes about hobbies or vocations, and staffing the Early Learning Center's health room.

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• offering a parent support group and parent education workshops on various topics such as child development, discipline, nutrition.

The Early Learning Center's new home was dedicated on April 9, 1995, a celebration jointly touted and sponsored by staff and parents. This team effort symbolizes the educational philosophy of the learning center: families, school, and community working together for children.

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Plymouth's Early Childhood Council: Celebrating the Young Child

by Mary Jo Tittl
Parenting Education Coordinator
Plymouth School District

At 10 a.m. on the third Monday of every April, the bells in every church steeple, school, and municipal building in Plymouth peal. They peal for the young children of Plymouth, nearly 1,000 strong, who gather downtown and join hands with their parents, grandparents, child care providers, teachers, businesspeople, and community members of all ages.

Little voices ring out with booming voices and the children sing with their friends, the adults. As befits honored guests, the children then watch a special parade of those in the community who help make Plymouth a good place to be a child: the fire chief, police officers, school superintendent, and the mayor, among them. It is "The Week of the Young Child" in Plymouth, a week that celebrates children.

The week's events are the brainchild of the Plymouth Early Childhood Coordinating Council, a group formed in Fall 1992 to create a community forum for meeting the needs of children birth to age nine and their families. Members of the council, who represent schools, social services, churches, business, health, civic organizations, and families, meet every two months to support and create common goals to serve children.

Inspired by the now-familiar African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," a major focus of the council has been to enhance the quality of interaction between parents and professionals working with Plymouth-area families by collaborating in their training. Other council goals for 1994-95 include

- investigating opportunities to streamline early childhood services to avoid duplication,
- improving prenatal and early childhood education and involvement,
- offering support where needed to implement developmentally-appropriate practices for all children,
- increasing collaboration in obtaining funding for early childhood education, and
- linking and communicating with existing groups in the area for 10- to 18-year olds.

Our membership consists of 85 individuals and is headed by a steering committee of ten community representatives. All meetings are open to any interested individual or organization. We believe that by working together, we can meet the needs of and strengthen children and families in a variety of ways.

A community needs assessment of child care issues, early childhood programming, and parent education we completed pointed out numerous ways we could collaborate on and enhance services. For example, the council is now sharing funding for parent education programs, including facilitator training, accessing host sites in the community, coordinating staff from different agencies, and promoting programming opportunities throughout the community.

All community early childhood staff, including child care providers, private and public preschool teachers, and Head Start staff, now receive uniform training in parent-teacher relationships, parent involvement with schools, screening procedures, and developmentally-appropriate practices.

One of the most colorful activities of the council remains Plymouth's Week of the Young Child, our annual, community-wide celebration that coincides with a national week promoting awareness of young child issues. The week is full of free events for families of young children, including "Village Fest," a dazzling array of information, entertainment, and educational activities. Other activities featured during the week are a "teddy bear sleep over" at the public library, a March of Dimes Walk, an elementary school Fun Fair,

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and the Blue Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Child Abuse.

The week also coincides with national Earth Week which is especially appropriate, as noted by the local newspaper:

"The future of our community, our nation, our society, and our civilization lies in the young people who we are raising now. While we concentrate on efforts to preserve our natural resources during Earth Week, we also need to concentrate on efforts to preserve our most important resource . . . our young children."

This Summer Dig Into Wisconsin Archaeology: A Primer for Families

by Bonnie L. Christensen, Educational Coordinator
Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center

What is Archaeology?

Archaeologists are scientists who study past people by investigating things that others have left behind and, by doing so, try to understand how those people lived. Archaeologists are sometimes confused with other scientists, including paleontologists, who study other early life such as dinosaurs, or geologists, who study the earth's crust and rocks and minerals. All three of these scientists use the scientific method to answer questions; they just ask questions about different things.

People who lived in Wisconsin as long as 12,000 years ago cannot tell us how they lived, so archaeologists look at what these people have left behind to piece together a picture of what life was like in the past. Objects that have been made or used by past people are called **artifacts**. Archaeologists are not only interested in the recovery of artifacts, they also want to know where the artifacts are found and what they are found with; this is called the artifact's **context**.

A simple way to understand this concept is to look at a word you do not know the meaning of. If you look at just that word you would probably have no way to determine its meaning other than looking it up in the dictionary. However, if the word is part of a sentence or paragraph, you can look at the words and sentences around the unknown word to help you understand its meaning.

Suppose that word was missing from the sentence altogether! You might not know what the rest of the sentence means without that word. To help you figure out and understand what the word means, you are using what are known as "context clues." Archaeologists do the same thing. One artifact alone gives an archaeologist only limited information, but additional information about where the artifact was recovered can help the archaeologist create a picture of how and when that artifact was used.

Preserving Sites

People have been living all over Wisconsin for a very long period of time. In the last 150 years, more and more land has been used for farming, housing, shopping centers, and a variety of other uses. Many of these activities disturb the sites where past people lived, thereby destroying the context of these past lives. You can help preserve the limited number of archaeological sites that are left in the state by

- contacting an archaeologist if you discover artifacts such as arrowheads, pieces of pottery, mounds, or rock carvings,
- calling an archaeologist if you see or know that a site is being damaged or destroyed,
- if you have artifacts, offering to show your collection to an archaeologist so he or she can record where and what you found.

Wisconsin's Pre- European People

Paleo Tradition: Big Game Hunters Time: 10000 - 7500 BC

The picture that archaeologists have created for the past people in Wisconsin goes back over 12,000 years. At that time, the ice age was just ending and the glaciers were receding. The climate was cooler and there were many animals that are now extinct including mammoth, mastodon, and the giant beaver.

The Paleo Indians moved around frequently, following herds of animals. They probably lived in small groups of 25 to 30 people and harvested available plants for food. Because these people moved frequently and lived in small groups, these sites are usually small and difficult to find.

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Archaic Tradition: Hunters and Gatherers Time: 7500 - 500 BC

Through time, the climate of Wisconsin changed and became warmer and drier than it is now. This shift brought new plants and animals to the area and people had to adapt to the changing environment. The big game from the paleo period were no longer present, but early forms of bison entered the region. Archaic people also hunted smaller game such as deer and elk, and gathered available plant foods such as hickory, walnuts, and a variety of berries. People continued to live in small groups and moved seasonally following the available plant and animal resources. Towards the end of the Archaic period, some copper was used, the first cemeteries appeared, and there is evidence of an extensive trade network.

Woodland Tradition: Hunters, Gatherers, Fishers, and Gardeners Time: 500 BC - 1000 AD

Over time, climatic conditions became much like we know today. People during this time period used many of the same skills of the Archaic tradition, including hunting and gathering, but also began using more river resources including fish, clams, beaver, and ducks.

During this time period, people began small-scale cultivation of plants, including gourds and squashes, and collected berries and nuts and many wild plants, including wild rice. People still moved seasonally but not to the extent that they had in the past. Pottery items used for cooking and storage were first made at this time. Large scale and elaborate burial rituals took place sometimes including exotic ceremonial materials that were brought into the region from great distances by way of an extensive trade network.

The hallmark of the Woodland tradition is the conical, linear, and animal-shaped mounds that were constructed.

Oneota Tradition: Hunters, Gatherers, Fishers, and Farmers Time: 1000 - 1500 AD

People during this time period began to congregate in large semi-permanent villages along rivers and near farmland. They continued to hunt, gather, and use river resources, but also practiced extensive farming of corn, beans, squash, tobacco, and sunflowers which are the ancestors of our modern farm crops. This period terminated with European contact.

Want to Learn More About Archaeology in Wisconsin?

The following activities will help you learn more about what archaeologists do, and what they have learned about Wisconsin's past peoples.

- Visit the library to find books or videos about archaeology.
- Contact the state archaeologist to find out who your regional archaeologist is.
- Contact your regional archaeologist to find out if there are any amateur archaeologist organizations, or universities with anthropologists in your area.
- Visit museums and archaeological sites to learn more about the science of archaeology and the pre-European people of the state.
- Ask members of your family or friends if they have any arrowheads or other artifacts. Contact an archaeologist for help identifying and recording your artifacts. Remember, collecting or taking artifacts out of their "context" destroys valuable and irreplaceable information. It's okay to walk plowed fields on private land with permission, and always remember to record the context of your finds! **Never dig!**
- Share information you have learned with others!

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Some Activities to Help You Learn About Archaeology

Garbology

Try this activity to learn how archaeologists study artifacts to draw a picture of what life was like for past people. Many of the things studied by archaeologists are part of the garbage left behind by past people. Have a friend or other family member put together a bag of "clean and safe" garbage (no used tissues, food scraps, cans, glass, and so on) from one room in the house.

Analyze the contents of the bag and try to determine what room in the house the garbage came from, how many people live in the house, ages, gender, what they do for entertainment, and so on. Try to learn as much as you can about the people from what they threw out. Make sure all your conclusions can be backed-up by the garbage in the bag. Think about the things that you can't learn from the garbage, too!

Ceramic Reconstruction

Please note that this activity requires parental supervision. Do not use glass items as the edges are very sharp!

Most of the pottery recovered by archaeologists is broken and needs to be glued back together. If this sounds easy, then give this activity a try and find out for yourself.

Take an old flower pot or plate (you can find one around the house or pick one up at a rummage sale). Put it in a paper bag and hit it with a hammer. Now you are ready to try to piece it back together. To make this activity go faster, tape the pieces back together instead of gluing them the way archaeologists do.

How long did it take you to put the pot back together? If you would like more of a challenge, try mixing two pots together or taking out some of the pieces. This is really closer to what archaeologists find, as many broken pots are usually mixed together and rarely are all the pieces found. Once the pot is put back together, think about how much more information you can gain from looking at the size and shape of the pot versus the one piece alone.

Bibliography

The following books will help you learn about the science of archaeology. You can find these and other titles in your school or local library.

Anderson, Joan. *From Map to Museum*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988. (middle - adult)

Cork, Barbara, and Reid, Struan. *The Young Scientist Book of Archaeology*. London: Usborne Publishing Ltd., 1984. (middle - high school)

Fagan, Brian M. *The Adventure of Archaeology*. Washington: National Geographic, 1989. (high school - adult)

Fradin, Dennis B. *Archaeology*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1983. (primary - middle)

James, Carollyn. *Digging Up the Past*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1990. (middle)

Pickering, Robert B. *I Can be an Archaeologist*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1987. (primary - middle)

Museums to Visit

- State Historical Society of Wisconsin Museum, 30 N. Carroll, Madison, WI 53703-2707. Exhibits explain the science of archaeology and Wisconsin's pre-European people. For more information call (608) 264-6555.
- Chippewa Valley Museum, P..O Box 1204, Eau Claire, WI 54702. This museum contains displays on Wisconsin's pre-European people. For more information call (715) 834-7871.
- Neville Public Museum, 210 Museum Place, Green Bay, WI 54303-2780. This museum contains displays on Wisconsin's pre-European people. For more information call (414) 448-4460.
- Riverside Park Museum, La Crosse Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau, 410 E. Veterans Memorial Drive, La Crosse, WI 54601. The mu-

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seum focuses on the early history of the people of the La Crosse area and the Mississippi River. For more information call (608) 782-2366.

Archaeological Sites to Visit

- Effigy Mounds National Monument, 151 Highway 76, Harpers Ferry, IA 52146. Located three miles north of Marquette on Iowa Route 76. Visitor center and informational film provide background information while a self-guided tour will allow you to view linear, conical, and effigy mounds. Group tours and a teacher packet are available. For more information call (319) 873-3491.
- Perrot State Park, P.O. Box 407, Trempealeau, WI 54661. Located one mile north of Trempealeau on Highway 93. Examples of conical and effigy mounds and the site of Perrot's early fur trade post are located in this park. Group tours and a teacher packet are available. For more information call (608) 534-6409.
- Roch-A-Cri, P.O. Box 100, Friendship, WI 53934. Located two miles north of Friendship on Highway 13. Examples of rock art including petroglyphs (carvings) and pictographs (paintings) are located in this park. For more information call (608) 339-6881.
- Lizard Mounds County Park, Washington County Land Use and Park Department, 333 E. Washington, Room 2300, West Bend, WI 53905. Located four miles northeast on 144 then one mile east on County Trunk A. This park contains 31 mounds including linear, conical, and effigy. For more information call (414) 335-4445.
- Aztalan State Park, 1213 S. Main St., Lake Mills, WI 53551. Located two miles east of Lake Mills on County Q. Visitors can view two reconstructed flat-topped mounds and a portion of the palisade. For more information call (414) 648-8774.

Who to Contact

- Robert Birmingham, State Archaeologist, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State St., Madison, WI 53706, (608) 264-6495. The state archaeologist's office can give you the name of your regional archaeologist.
- Bonnie Christensen, Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601, (608) 785-8454.

Classes

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC) offers a variety of summer camps for children, year-round parent-child workshops, public field schools, workshops and classes for teachers, lecture series, an Archaeology Day, and a variety of other ways for the public to become involved in archaeology in Wisconsin. For more information contact Bonnie Christensen at MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Phone (608) 785-8454.

Learning Together 2

Resources for Family-Community Involvement with Schools

Contact these institutions or organizations for publications, speakers, and a variety of user-friendly materials to advance your family-community-school partnership efforts.

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325
(304) 347-0400

Center for Early Adolescence
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Suite 233, Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, NC 27510
(919) 966-1148

Center on Parent Involvement
Johns Hopkins University
c/o Joyce Epstein
3505 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
(301) 338-7570

Cornell University Family Matters Project
7 Research Park, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 255-2080 or 255-2531

Council of the Great City Schools
1413 K St., N.W., 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 635-5431

Home and School Institute
1201 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 466-3633

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
119 N. Payne St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 683-6232

National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Pkwy., #301
Columbia, MD 21044-3199
(301) 977-9300
(800) NETWORK (638-9675)

National Congress of Parents and Teachers
1201 16th St., N.W., #619
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-7878

National School Boards Association
1680 Duke St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 838-6722

National School Volunteer Program
701 N. Fairfax St., #320
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-4880

Parent Involvement Center
Chapter 1 Technical Assistance Center
RMC Research Corporation
400 Lafayette Rd.
Hampton, NH 03842

Parent Involvement in Education Program
San Diego County Office of Education
c/o Janet Chrispeels
6401 Linda Vista Rd., Room 407
San Diego, CA 92111-7399
(619) 292-3500

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